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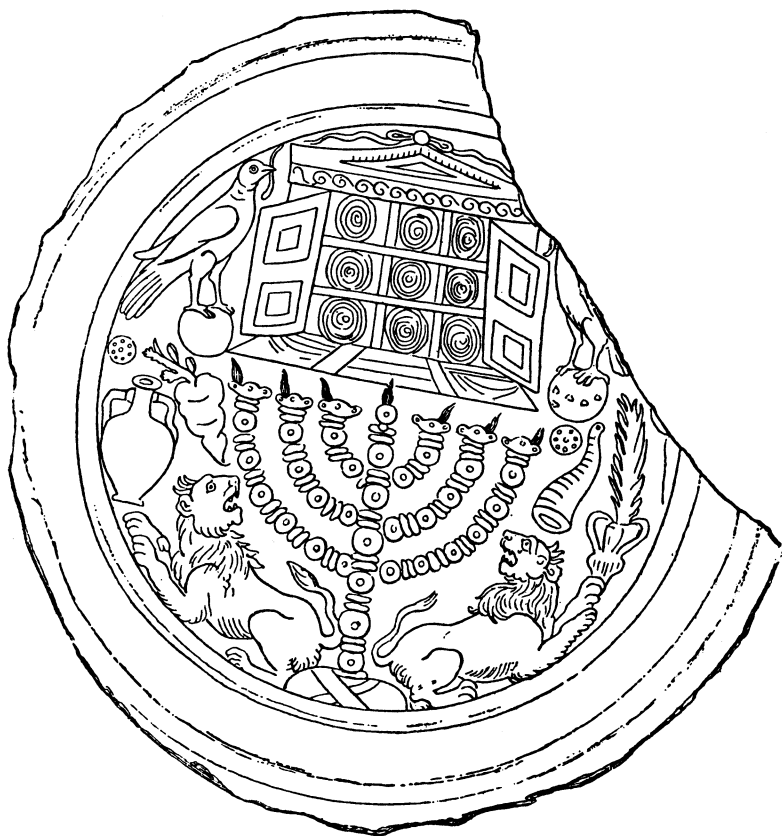
EARLIEST REPRESENTATION OF ARK OF THE LAW.

ON several glasses found in the Museo Borgiano at Rome, are given representations of Jewish objects of worship, which are probably the earliest in existence. No indication is given of the source whence they reached the Museo, but it is probable that they formed part of the relics found in the old Jewish catacomb when it was opened in 1864. The glasses, two of which are reproduced here, are figured in Garrucci, *Arte Cristiana*, vol. VI, plate 490.

The earliest of these glasses is probably the broken one containing the largest number of symbols. The Menorah, or Hanuka Lamp, is evidently imitated from that represented on the Arch of Titus, and gives a sharper reproduction of it than nowadays, when the weathering has almost destroyed the distinctness of outline. From the representation of the flame it is clear that the lamp was fed by oil, and that the tops of the branches were formed by miniature lamps, similar to those familiar to all visitors to classical museums, with the flame issuing from one of the ends. The *Lulab* and *Etrog* clearly resemble those in use nowadays, as might be anticipated; but from their comparative size it would appear that the original *Lulab* was smaller. The Laver was probably that used by the Levites in the sole sacerdotal function which they nowadays perform, and might be adopted as the recognized shape, since the community of Rome would have been in more direct touch with the Holy Land than that of almost any other European community. The two little circles are obviously intended to represent Mazzot, and it is curious to notice that their round form has persisted through the ages.

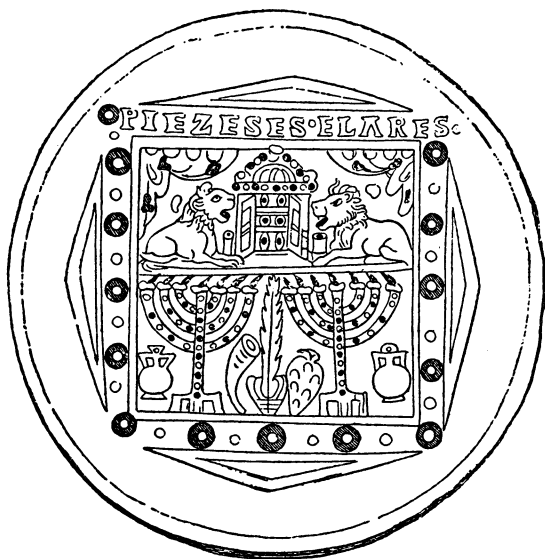
But the case or press at the top of the design is by far the most interesting thing in it. Its object is plain. The helical patterns in the nine divisions of it merely represent the ends of scrolls, and obviously, scrolls of the law. In other words, this case is the earliest representation we have of the Ark of the Law. Now it is equally plain that it is nothing more nor less than a bookcase as used at Rome in early times. The frontispiece to Dr. J. W. Clark's *Care*

of *Books* shows a book press of exactly the same form, and this is dated in the middle of the sixth century. It follows, therefore, that the early Ark of the Law was only a receptacle for the books of the Law in the ordinary form which a bookcase took in those days; and this shape is preserved in the next earliest Ark of the Law,



of which we have record, in that formerly belonging to the Strauss collection, and now in the Musée Cluny; this was brought from Modena, and is dated 1505. It is an ordinary cupboard or press, precisely like those used in the Vatican Library as bookcases (see Jacobs and Wolf, *Catalogue Anglo-Jewish Historical Expedition*, p. 120, illustrated edition, plate 28; Clark, *Care of Books*, pass.). This

explains also and justifies the practice of the Sephardim in not having curtains to their Arks of the Law. Still more, it removes the ordinary assumption that the Ark of the Law replaces in the synagogue the Holy of Holies in the Temple, to which analogy, in large measure, the use of the curtain is due. I am informed by Dr. L. Ginzburg that so far from the Ark of the Law being a necessary part of synagogue furniture in Talmudic times, the scrolls



were sometimes kept for the sake of safety apart altogether from the synagogue when this happened to be outside the city walls (*Kidd.* 33a).

There remain two figures which differ from the rest in being entirely symbolical. The lions are the conventional representation of Judah according to Jacob's blessing, Gen. xlix. 9. The doves are the usual symbolic representation of the synagogue, as based upon the verse, Ps. lvi. 1 (comp. *Sanh.* 95a).

JOSEPH JACOBS.